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UNCLAS PARAMARIBO 000195

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SENSITIVE

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: ETRD SCUL TBIO NS
SUBJECT: SURINAME: POST HONORS WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DAY

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY. During a lunch in honor of World Intellectual Property Day, guests from the Government of Suriname's (GOS) newly convened Working Committee on Intellectual Property Rights explained that they have a six-month mandate to compare Suriname's legislation to TRIPS requirements and make recommendations on which areas of current GOS legislation are adequate and which need to be improved. Working groups will then be instituted to develop new legislation to protect intellectual property. The creation of this committee is a new GOS effort to address Suriname's international commitments to protect intellectual property. End Summary.

¶2. (U) On April 25, the Ambassador hosted a lunch in honor of World Intellectual Property Day, which targeted guests from the Government of Suriname's (GOS) newly convened Working Committee on Intellectual Property Rights. The fifteen-member committee is intra-agency and includes members of the private sector. The Permanent Secretary of Justice and Police, Mr. Sharma Lakhisaran, is the official head of the committee, and a Bureau of Intellectual Property Rights staffer serves as Secretary to the committee.

¶3. (U) Lunch guests, representing police, customs, business, and academia told us they had a six-month mandate to review the WTO TRIPS agreements in order to make recommendations to the GOS on which areas require new legislation. Thereafter, working groups would be created to draft legislation on the focus areas. The guests did not know of whom the working groups would be composed, or whether oversight of the working groups would be done by the committee or by the Bureau of Intellectual Property Rights.

¶4. (U) Participants said although the committee's mandate was from January through June 2008, members were only designated in late February. The committee has met twice monthly since then. A number of committee members had no prior expertise on intellectual property issues. Due to these challenges, all agreed it would be difficult to meet the June 2008 deadline for recommendations. Some participants suggested the committee could request an extension to its mandate, while others expressed concern that the longer Suriname goes without intellectual property legislation, the more entrenched those who violate intellectual property will be in the marketplace.

¶5. (U) One participant asked if Suriname could expect U.S. government assistance on addressing intellectual property issues. She suggested once the new legislation is drafted, the United States government offer Suriname a "train the trainer" course on intellectual property protection and enforcement. The Economic Officer explained existing opportunities to participate in the Global Intellectual Property Academy (GIPA) in the United States, and participants requested Post provide their committee with course information as it becomes available.

¶6. (SBU) Comment. Suriname has a poor record on the protection of intellectual property, and counterfeit goods are plentiful in the marketplace. Last fall, the Foundation for Copyright Protection in Suriname (SASUR), Suriname's copyrights watchdog, had its activities suspended by the government after numerous complaints about the organization's lack of transparency, and after anecdotes that it even tried to collect fees from artists performing their own music. The creation of the current committee is the new GOS effort to address Suriname's international commitments to protect intellectual property. End Comment.

GENTON